THE JOURNAL GAZETTE
METRO

Religion program legal, schools say PAGE 3C

Eartha Kitt, 81, dies PAGE 2C

www.journalgazette.net FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2008 SECTION C

Photos by Samuel Hoffman | The Journal Gazette

Becky McManus, left, and other scanners work at scribes, digitally scanning books into the Internet Archive.

New life for rare texts

In library's basement, scribes get ready to scan Lincoln documents

ANGELA MAPES TURNER
The Journal Gazette

Deep in the catacombs of the Allen County Library, in a darkened room, 10 black-cloaked "scribes" quietly pore over yellowed texts:

"The History of Natrona County, Wyoming, 1888-1922."

"Cornwall Parish Registers, Marriages, 1853-1913."

"Fort Wayne, Indiana, City Directory, 1864-1865."

But these scribes aren't people – they're state-of-the-art scanning machines from nonprofit Internet Archive, the library basement's out-of-sight secret. The basement lab will play a vital role in digitizing the former Lincoln Museum collection for public access.

Though housed in the library, Internet Archive is an independent operation, part of a national network of scanning centers that put rare books and documents on the Internet for public consumption.

Each scribe in the archive is a high-tech scanner, with a glass overlay to hold books open. An operator raises and lowers the overlay using a foot pedal, allowing pages to be turned easily.

In Allen County, the operation is directed by Jeff Sharpe, an enthusiastic advocate of the archive project who gives off a professorial vibe in his tweed blazer and glasses.

The project got off the ground in Allen County through support of Microsoft, which launched a project to scan books and scholarly articles for posting online.

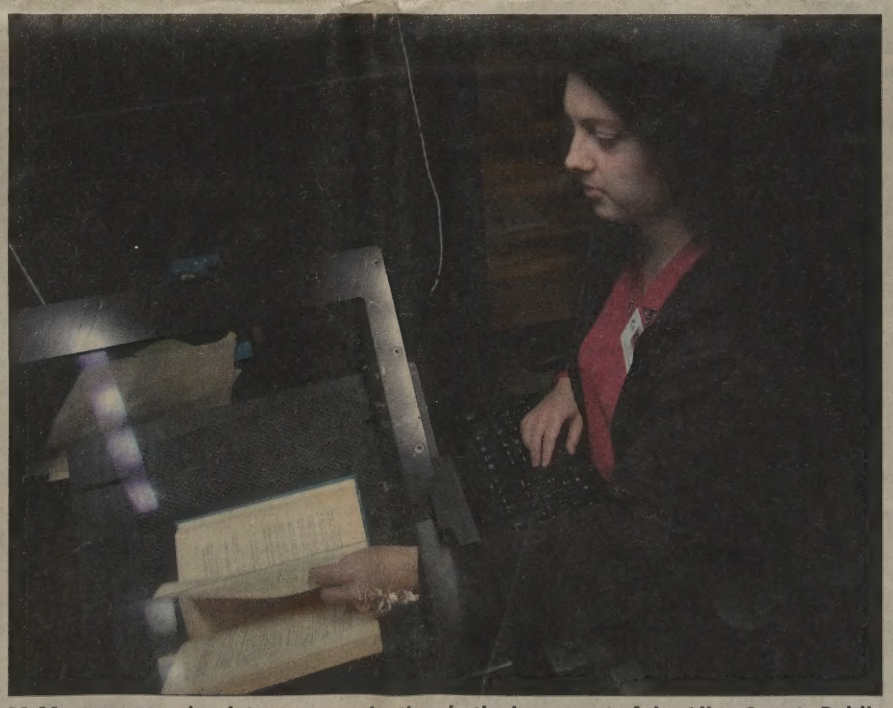
In May, Microsoft announced it would end its support of the project, and some in Allen County worried the project would end before it got off the ground.

But Microsoft donated the machines to the Allen County library – a setup worth about $1 million, Sharpe said – and the project continues.

Internet Archive has other regional scanning centers in Boston, Toronto, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C.

Sharpe realizes Fort Wayne is playing in the big leagues. Other scanning centers are located in places such as the Library of Congress and the Princeton Theological Seminary.

That's why he was so pleased by the announcement this month that the Fort Wayne center would help digitize the Lincoln Museum collection.



McManus scans a book two pages at a time in the basement of the Allen County Public Library. The Lincoln Museum documents will be digitized for Internet Archives.

In the fold-out room, Jay Carroll examines a text sent from the Carnegie Library in Pittsburgh to be scanned.

The Lincoln Financial Foundation shut down its museum after 80 years in Fort Wayne. An aggressive campaign by an Indiana coalition persuaded the foundation to give the $20 million collection to the state, with most of its documents going to the Allen County Public Library and artifacts to the Indiana State Museum.

No timeline has been established for when the documents will be sent to the library, but Sharpe and his staff are looking forward to adding them to the digital collection.

"This really put us on the map," Sharpe said.

Staying in Fort Wayne

But even more, Sharpe's happy that Internet Archive's basement room will play a role in keeping the collection in Fort Wayne, where so many people worked to put it together.

"It'll keep us going, but more importantly, I think, it'll stay in the community," he said.

Sharpe, a book lover himself, believes in the importance of libraries but also in the importance of access. He plucked a random book off the shelf: "Davidson County Women in the World War, 1914-1919," which recounts the lives of Tennessee residents nearly a century ago.

The book is part of the Allen County Public Library's Genealogy Center. Since being scanned in May, the book has been viewed 416 times, according to Internet Archive.

"How many people would

Texts, Page 4C

DIGITAL DOCUMENTS

Internet Archive, which has a regional scanning center in the Allen County Public Library, has digitized 1.1 million documents available on its Web site, www.archive.org. Among them are a few oddities:

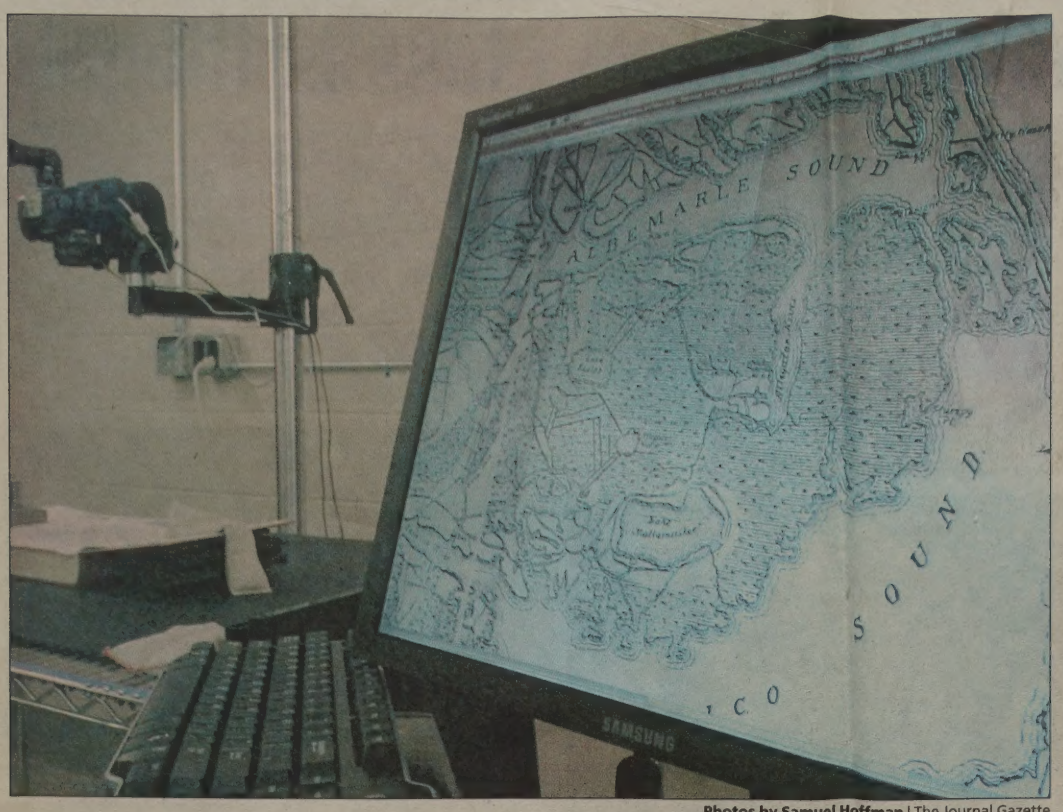
Oldest book: "De Civitate Dei," 1475
Most pages in a book: 4,111
Strangest discovery in a book: 8-inch lock of braided hair
Most ironic title: "The life of Mohammed: Founder of the Religion of Islam, and of the Empire of the Saracens" by George Bush (the first cousin of George W. Bush's great-great-great-grandfather)
Source: Internet Archive

THE HIT LIST

The most downloaded books from the Allen County Public Library's collection as of last week:

- "Names: And Their Meanings: A Book for the Curious," by Leopold Wagner, 1858
- "Knight's Heraldic Illustrations Designed for the Use of Herald Painters and Engravers," by Frederick Knight, 1843
- "Somerset Parish Registers, Marriages (Volume 10)" 1853-1913

Source: Internet Archive



Photos by Samuel Hoffman | The Journal Gazette

A Civil War-era map is digitally captured by the camera at left at the fold-out station, a photographic setup used for oversized documents.

TEXTS

Continued from Page 1C

have looked at that book upstairs?" Sharpe asked.

The Fort Wayne scanning center's proximity to the Allen County Public Library's Genealogy Center, which periodically sends books down on a dumbwaiter to be scanned, is a dream for genealogical researchers. Instead of traveling to Fort Wayne to view an obscure text, they can view it free online.

As of mid-November, Fort Wayne's scanning center put more than 3,000 books online, and those books have been viewed more than 104,000 times.

Because access and visibility were two main reasons the Lincoln Financial Foundation hoped to find a new home for its artifact collection, the scanning center at the library was a big part of the library's appeal.

"That put us in a very good position," library director Jeff Krull said at the Lincoln collection announcement.

A repetitive task

Valuable the work may be, but it also can be mind-numbing for those who add to Internet Archive's collection.

"MUST have a high tolerance for repetitive tasks!" warns the job description for volunteer archive scanners.

Jay Carroll examines a text before it is to be digitized for Internet Archive.

Thiptida Chatham, 29, knows those repetitive tasks well.

Chatham is one of the scanning center's eight paid employees. She's worked there since May.

The scanning room, kept dark, feels isolated from the rest of the world – Chatham usually tries to see daylight on her lunch break. It's often chilly, so she wears a chunky sweater.

"The first few weeks, it's kind of hard," Chatham said.

Last week, she was scanning a yellowed journal, its pages filled with tight, careful script that stretched to the pages' margins.

After the book is scanned, the pages must be cropped. That work can take all day, especially with a book with tight margins such as the one Chatham was scanning, she said.

After a while, a rhythm develops. Chatham listens to music on her MP3 player or sometimes the audio of a movie online.

On her computer screen, she works in several windows at once. Uploading the scans can take several minutes, so she often scans one book and, while the files load, crops the pages of another book in a separate window.

There's not much time for reading the books, although Chatham often checks out her work from home.

Her favorite book that she's scanned is "The Lucky Bag," a 1921 annual publication by the U.S. Naval Academy. The book, normally housed in the Allen County Public Library's Genealogy Center, contains elaborate full-color illustrations and period photos.

Sharpe and 16 other regional scanning center coordinators have a say in what books get put online, said Robert Miller, Internet Archive's director of books.

But Internet Archive is much more than just text, Miller said.

The company actually was founded to create a record of digital technology in an age where many Web sites are updated by the minute.

By 1999, the organization began expanding to add moving images, texts, audio and software, as well as archived Web pages – more than 150 billion today, Miller said.

"The archive really is a wonderful tapestry of user-driven content," Miller said.

aturner@jg.net

Christmas trees can be recycled at Foster Park West, among other sites.

Clint Keller | Journal Gazette

County sets up sites for recycling trees

To the tune of "O Tannenbaum":

For Christmas trees, for Christmas trees, there are options for recycling (repeat)

For Fort Wayne, here and there

In Allen County, nearly everywhere

For Christmas trees, for Christmas trees, there are options for recycling.

(At least from Dec. 26 through Jan.16)

For Christmas trees, for Christmas trees, there are options for recycling (repeat)

They will not take if in the trash

Or if ornaments and tinsel are on the branch

For Christmas trees, for Christmas trees, there are options for recycling

(Wreaths will not be accepted)

– Rebecca S. Green, The Journal Gazette

DROP-OFF SITES

Ivy Tech and Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne are not drop-off sites this year. Trees will not be picked up with regular trash, and all ornaments, tinsel and plastic bags must be removed. Wreaths will not be accepted. Trees will not be collected curbside within the city of Fort Wayne.

Fort Wayne area
- Allen County Highway Garage – 2234 Carroll Road
- Foster Park West – soccer field parking lot on the west side
- Foellinger Theatre – in the southwest corner of the back parking lot
- Shoaff Park – Conklin Pavilion
- McMillen Park – pool parking lot

Monroeville area
- Community Park – parking lot, north end

New Haven area
- Jury Park
- Meadowbrook School parking lot
- City hall, 815 Lincoln Highway E. – north side of the building

Woodburn area
- Front Street – under the water tower

Leo-Cedarville area
- Across from Riverside Gardens Park – corner of Grabill and Schwartz roads

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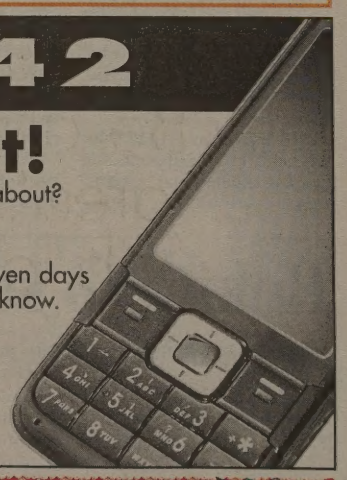

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ML: 2813363

This home is priced with a $5000 carpet allowance and appliance allowance of $2500. White cabinets popular colors, vinyl is installed already. Home built by Fort Wayne Construction Trades and some private contractors on cement and plumbing. There are no property taxes on file. This is a not for profit so taxes begin on date of closing. 3 bedrooms, 2 baths.

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